

# USDA **NEWS RELEASE** FSA

## **Buy-In Waiver Extension Approved for Disaster Assistance Programs**

Honolulu, Hawaii, March 19, 2009 – Steve Peterson, Executive Director of USDA's Farm Service Agency in Hawaii announced today that producers who did not obtain crop insurance or Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for 2008 can pay a buy-in fee through May 18, 2009, to become eligible for 2008 disaster assistance programs authorized by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008.

"Producers have an additional opportunity to become eligible for several programs if they suffered 2008 agricultural losses due to natural disaster," said Peterson.

Producers who have not already taken the necessary steps to become eligible for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE), Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP), and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP) are required to complete the following steps by May 18, 2009:

- Pay a \$100 "buy-in" fee per crop. The maximum fee is \$300 per county, per producer, not to exceed \$900 for multi-county producers.
- In the case of each insurable crop, excluding grazing land, agree to obtain a policy or plan of insurance for the next insurance year for which crop insurance is available; coverage level should equal 70 percent or more of the yield at 100 percent of the price.
- In the case of each noninsurable crop, agree to file the required paperwork and pay the applicable administrative NAP coverage fee by the applicable state application closing date for the next available year.

Producers who choose to "buy in" under this provision will be considered, for insured crops, to have obtained a policy or plan of insurance for the 2008 crop year at a level of coverage not to exceed 70 percent of the yield at 100 percent of the price. For noninsurable crops, producers will be considered to have a level of coverage equal to 70 percent of the yield. These levels of coverage will be used to calculate the 2008 SURE guarantee.

Producers who meet the definition of "Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource," or "Beginning Farmer or Rancher," are not required to pay the buy-in fee.

A contact list is set forth below:

COUNTY	PHONE	FAX	EMAIL
Hawaii	(808) 933-8341	(808) 933-8345	lester.ueda@hi.usda.gov
Honolulu	(808) 483-8600	(808) 483-8615	jason.shitanishi@hi.usda.gov
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# Dan Inouye

U.S. SENATOR FROM HAWAII



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## INOUE ANNOUNCES AGRICULTURAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE FOR HAWAII FARMERS

Wednesday, March 18, 2009

**WASHINGTON** — Senate Appropriations Chairman Daniel K. Inouye announced today that as a result of a provision he added to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), Hawaii agricultural producers will receive financial assistance for losses resulting from natural disasters, including drought, flooding, vog and varroa mites in 2008.

Federal assistance programs for tropical agriculture producers are very limited since these programs were mainly designed for mainland agricultural conditions and practices. "I am pleased my colleagues agreed that losses suffered by Hawaii growers in 2008 were especially severe," said Chairman Inouye. "It is important that federal agricultural disaster assistance programs be more flexible to adequately address these losses."

Even with legislation, disaster assistance for Hawaii producers is not automatic. Eligible producers who wish to become eligible must provide documentation of the losses incurred and pay a "buy-in" fee through the transitional disaster assistance program which was enacted in 2008. The ARRA stimulus bill provision extends the sign-up period to mid-May, 2009. "I encourage all Hawaii growers who have incurred losses in 2008 to sign up immediately by contacting the Farm Service Agency in their county," Inouye stated.

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